July/August, 1981

Lasca Leaves

Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

BALDWIN BONANZA XI

Although almost 10,000 people crowded the grounds of the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum for Baldwin Bonanza XI and the preview party May 2 and 3, the events went very smoothly. According to Joyce (Mrs. John) Bauer, Bonanza chairman, the traffic flow improved because of the new Hall of Environmental Education and adjoining 10-foot-wide concrete walkway. By placing the ferns, rare plants, palms, bromeliads, and handicrafts in the Hall, the planning committee kept the Saran shelter on the lawn free for the thousands of other plants on sale. The walkway, finished only weeks before the sale, conveniently linked the two areas and guided the browsers.

The goal of previous Bonanzas was to benefit the Arboretum's building program. Now the Hall, financed in part by those sales, played an important part in the success of Baldwin Bonanza XI.

Milton and Dorothy Murset, co-chairmen for the 1982 sale, look forward to the same cooperation from Las Voluntarias members, John Provine, and the Arboretum staff that has marked the Baldwin Bonanza for the past 11 years.

Dorothy (Mrs. Milton) Murset, center with dark glasses, joins the crowd shopping for rare plants, palms, bromeliads, ferns, and crafts in the new Hall of Environmental Education during Baldwin Bonanza XI at the Arboretum.

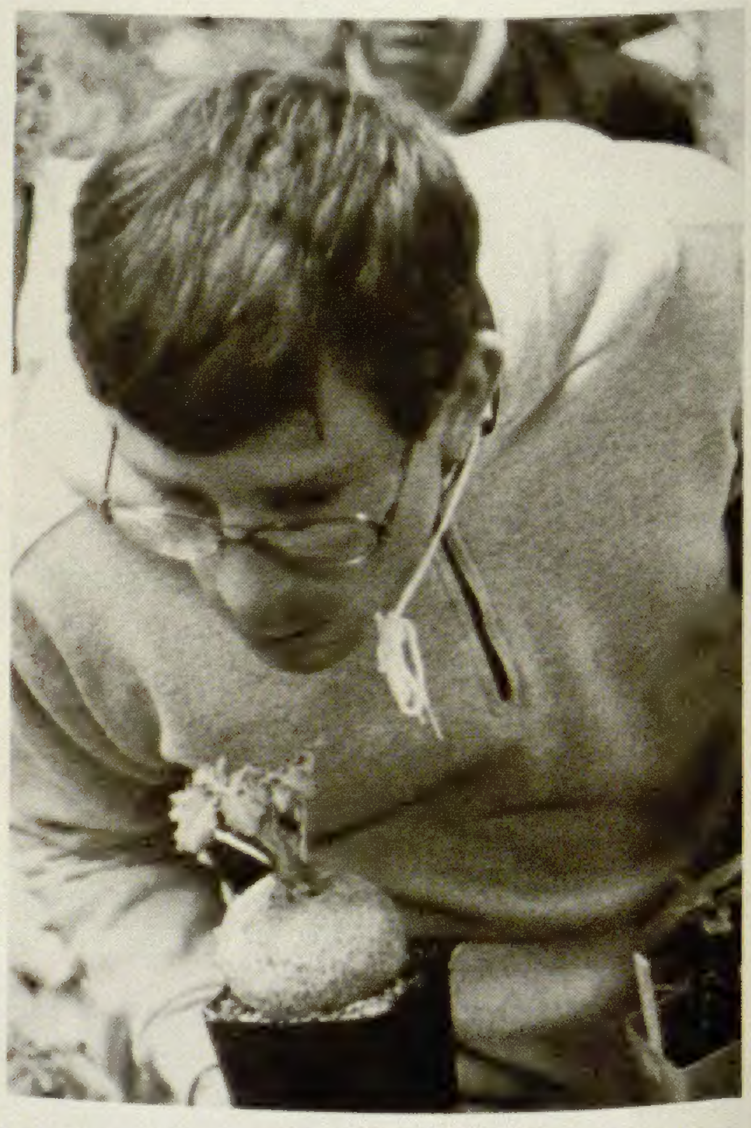
Above *Greenery surrounds Margaret (Mrs. James) Thornton in the houseplant section.*

Above *Charles Blough helps customers select palms.*

Left *Archie Armata (left) hands a customer one of the 250 rare rhapis palms sold.*

Left *Shoppers didn't seem to mind sidestepping construction outside the Hall of Environmental Education.*

Below *This buyer of rare succulents holds a* Jatropha *species.*



He carries away the beginning of a Japanese maple (Acer palmatum) *grove.*

Margaret Gillingham, left, and Patricia (Mrs. Douglas) Copley advise a customer choosing impatiens.

Photos by William Aplin

Balloons and inexpensive, volunteer-grown plants drew youngsters to the children's booth.

Above *Her staghorn fern* (Platycerium bifurcatum) *makes a dramatic hat.*

Upper right *Janet (Mrs. W. D.) Pennycook takes custody of a customer's plants so he can do more shopping at the Baldwin Bonanza.*

Right *Every little bit helps with a wagon load of grape vines.*

Below *Assistant Director Roy Ito and Jo (Mrs. Herbert) Iske watch as Diane (Mrs. Varick) Martin describes the California Arboretum Foundation to prospective members. More than 100 people joined during the Bonanza.*

Photos by William Aplin

(LASCA continues after page 32)

VIBURNUM
Versatile Garden Ornamental

by Gary Cromwell

IF YOU ARE A NATIVE of Europe or of the eastern United States, you probably remember such expressions as arrowwood, snowball, hobble bush, nannyberry, black haw, high-bush cranberry, and wayfaring tree. These are some of the common names given to the more than two hundred species of *Viburnum,* a temperate to subtropical genus of shrubs and small trees of the honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae). The generic name, believed to derive from the Latin *vieo* (to weave or bind), was officially applied to these plants during the 18th century by Karl von Linne, father of modern botanical nomenclature.

More than half the known species are from Asia, while other *Viburnums* are native to North America, South America, Europe, the Canary Islands, and the Mediterranean region. A few species, such as the dockmackie *(V. acerifolium),* extend from the northeastern United States into Canada and Alaska, and at least one species, the small-leaved *V. microphyllum,* occurs in Mexico.

Stiff, upright branches and rounded clusters of small white flowers against dark green foliage make Viburnum rigidum, *above, an outstanding choice as a hedge plant. The Chinese snowball (V. macrocephalum), below, is one of the most attractive of the viburnums. These 6 to 8-inch clusters of sterile flowers appear in mid-spring.*

Photos by William Aplin

The doublefile viburnum (V. plicatum *f.* tomentosum) *has a lacelike pattern of delicate wheel-shaped flowers in two rows along each horizontal branch. Young shoots bear many minute hairs.*

Many of the Asian species are found in China, India, the Himalayas, Japan, Russia, and as far south as Java.

Modern gardeners grow viburnums in many regions of the northern hemisphere, because the plants generally are not finicky about soil type or most other environmental conditions. Dozens of *Viburnum* species and hybrids have been cultivated for centuries in Europe, Asia, and the eastern United States. Some of the most cold-resistant deciduous species are grown in the northeastern part of this country, particularly New England. Perhaps a dozen species are suited to the wet winters and dry summers of Southern California, but adequate regular watering during hot months here is important.

The byword for these plants among viburnum growers is versatility. If you want an evergreen or deciduous habit, spectacular fruit color, striking autumnal foliage, exceptional fragrance, or showiness of flowers *en masse,* there is a viburnum to fit the need. This diversity may account in part for their ranking among the world's most popular ornamentals, and it is the non-technical basis for grouping these plants into various categories for landscaping use.

A few of the low or dwarf types 1 to 3 feet high are *V. opulus* cv. Nanum, one of the guelder roses; *V. tinus cv.* Compactum; and *V. davidii.* Taller shrubs include the evergreen *V. japonicum* and the deciduous black haw *(V. prunifolium).* Many of the cultivated species reach a maximum height of 6 to 12 feet. Exceptions are the 30-foot nannyberry tree *(V. lentago)* and the 40-foot *V. cylindricum.*

Depending upon the species, the simple opposite leaves may be nearly oval to oblong in shape, smooth-edged to toothed or lobed, and may or may not have surface hairs. Many lack basal appendages (called stipules) on petioles. Leaf color varies from the bright green of young leaves and dull, dark, or gray green during spring and summer to shades of green, red, yellow, or purple in fall. A few forms have variegated leaves. Some species have smooth, flat, glossy leaves, while others are clothed with dull, rough-surfaced leaves deeply contoured by veins.

Viburnum flowers usually are small, ¼-inch to 1½ inches in diameter, but they occur in fairly large clusters technically called panicles or umbellike cymes. The basically white flowers may be tinged rose, pink, yellow, or green. Flowers may be wheel or bell-shaped or infrequently tubular. Each fertile flower is bisexual, pentamerous, and has an inferior ovary. The fruit, a one-seeded drupe, ranges in color from red, steel blue-black or black, to purple or turquoise blue. Some species have all fertile flowers or combinations of central fertile flowers and marginal sterile flowers. Horticulturists have produced selected cultivars, such as the snowball viburnum, with large, closely packed clusters of sterile flowers. These plants are chosen for their spectacular floral display which sometimes causes them to be confused with *Hydrangea* species of the saxifrage family.

Hedges, roadside and highway island plantings, and lawn specimens are suitable landscaping applications for *Viburnum* species in Southern California. The plants may be enjoyed individually or in lawn and garden groupings. Laurustinus *(V. tinus)* is planted along many roadsides and freeway slopes in Los Angeles and Orange counties. This striking evergreen shrub grows up to 10 feet tall, has dark green to reddish-bronze upper leaf surfaces, white to pinkish flowers in gently rounded or flat clusters, and black fruits. The species originated in the Mediterranean region, a clue to its adaptability in our area.

Living examples of 30 additional *Viburnum* species may be seen at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. Seven 5-foot shrubs of *V. rigidum* grow just southeast of the Begonia Greenhouse, five of them in an informal hedge along an unpaved path. In early spring, the stout branches and dark green leaves are accented by numerous clusters of small, brilliant white flowers. The beautiful Chinese snowball *(V. macrocephalum)* with large puffy heads of green-tinged to pure white flowers is represented by specimens north of the library-herbarium building and on the west side of the Meadowbrook section. These 12-foot-tall, semievergreen shrubs are a popular attraction when flowering from March through early May.

Most *Viburnum* species in the Arboretum's collection are concentrated in the Asiatic-North American section west of Meadowbrook. A quiet stroll among the many trees and shrubs in this area is sure to delight the viburnum lover. Here grow the evergreen sandankwa viburnum *(V. suspensum)* from Japan; sweet viburnum *(V. odoratissimum)*, sometimes confused with *V. japonicum* in nurseries; the deciduous European-North African cranberry bush *(V. opulus)* with lobed maple-like leaves and represented by at least six cultivated varieties at botanic gardens and private residences; the 6-foot evergreen *V. japonicum;* one of several hybrids, such as *Viburnum* x *burkwoodii,* a 6-foot shrub with lustrous green leaves and fragrant pinkish-white flowers in 3-inch-wide clusters; wayfaring tree or twistwood *(V. lantana)* which has oval leaves and grows to 15 feet; and many others.

Medicines, foods, and other economic products have been derived from viburnums throughout recorded history. Russians made pipe stems and whip handles from young shoots of high-bush cranberry or pimbina *(V. opulus),* and peoples of Siberia drank spirits distilled from the fruits or ate a paste of the fruit mixed with honey and flour. The Swedes still eat the fruits of this species. I have eaten jelly made from the fruits collected and processed by my niece in Maine. The delicious jelly has a rich dark red color. Stems of the wayfaring tree *(V. lantana)* were a source of basketry materials, pipe stems, and cabinet wood for Germanic and other European cultures. The Swiss make ink from its fruits. The Korean spice viburnum *(V. carlesii)* is still prized for its perfumed flowers.

American Indians, particularly tribes living east of the Mississippi, used the plants for medicines and food. The Malecites of Nova Scotia and the Maine Penobscots steeped leaves of *V. opulus* in hot water as a tea for swollen glands and mumps. The Ojibwa (Chippewa) people northwest of the Great Lakes treated stomach cramps with the inner bark of *V. opulus* and kidney ailments with a nannyberry *(V. lentago)* infusion. Other American Indians employed the root bark of black haw *(V. prunifolium)* of central and eastern North America as a sedative, a uterine tonic, and an antispasmodic. The Catawba people drank the mashed bark soaked in a flour and water mixture for dysentery and treated stomach problems with tea made from its roots. The maple-leaved viburnum *(V. acerifolium)* was familiar to Menominees of northern Michigan as a medicine for colic and cramps. Many tribes ate the fruits of viburnums, sometimes as a substitute for true cranberries (*Vaccinium* species),

Selected Arboretum Viburnums

Deciduous

V. x bodnantense. Hybrid. Bodnant V. To 11 ft. Fragrant. Infls.* to 3 in. wide.

V. carlesii. Korean Spice V. To 8 ft. Fragrant. Infls. 2-3 in. wide.

V. dentatum. Arrowwood. To 15 ft. Infls. 4 in. wide.

V. lantana. Wayfaring Tree. 8 - 15 ft. Infls. 2 - 4 in. wide.

V. opulus. European Cranberry Bush. 10 - 20 ft. Infls. 2 - 4 in. wide.

V. plicatum f. *tomentosum.* Double-file V. To 15 ft. Infls. 2-4 in. wide.

V. prunifolium. Black Haw. To 15 ft. Infls. 2-4 in. wide (synonym: *V. pyrifolium*).

V. trilobum. Cranberry Bush. 10-15 ft. Infls. 2-3 in. wide.

Evergreen

V. x burkwoodii. Hybrid. 4-6 ft. Fragrant. Infls. 2.5 - 3.5 in. wide.

V. japonicum. To 6 ft. Fragrant fls. in 4-inch infls.

V. macrocephalum. Chinese Snowball. 12-20 ft. Infls. 6-8 in. across (synonym: *V. macrocephalum* cv. Sterile).

V. odoratissimum var. *awabukii.* To 12 ft. Fragrant fls. (synonym: *V. awabukii*).

V. rhytidophyllum. Leatherleaf V. 6-20 ft. Infls. 4-8 in. wide.

V. rigidum. Canary Island V. 6-10 ft. Infls. 3-4.5 in. wide.

V. suspensum. Sandankwa V. 6-12 ft. Infls. 2-4 in. wide.

V. tinus. Laurustinus. 6-12 ft. Infls. 2-4 in. wide.

*Inflorescence

and the leaves of certain species were smoked by various woodland tribes.

Viburnums can be grown without severe pruning for a natural appearance or kept neatly clipped for a more formal garden. After a number of years, the branches of such spreading shrubs as *V. alnifolium* may become entangled making a forested area difficult to walk through. Its common name, hobble bush, was applied because the untrimmed branches tend to trip the unwary. The graceful branching habit of viburnums provides good living spaces and food sources for a variety of birds.

William Aplin

The broad, rounded habit and profuse blooms of V. macrocephalum *are reasons for its popularity as a display speciman.*

Viburnums will adapt to most soils and easily survive the mild winters in this part of the state. They are propagated by hardwood cuttings, cuttings of the green wood under glass, grafting or layering, and by seeds following stratification. The flowers, fresh or dried, may be picked throughout the long blooming season for decorative use.

If you are a lover of natural beauty and have been looking for a low maintenance addition to your garden, you might consider one of the viburnums. As is true of many plants, not all *Viburnum* species do equally well here. Fortunately, however, some of the most beautiful species can be grown in coastal Southern California. Visit the Plant Science Library at the Arboretum to read some of the many fine references on this genus, then see the living specimens on the grounds.

Dr. Gary Cromwell is a biologist, ethnobotanist, and taxonomist in the Department's Research Division.

CALENDAR

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1981

LOS ANGELES STATE AND COUNTY ARBORETUM, Arcadia

JULY 3, 4, 5 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Cactus & Succulent Show & Sale
Cactus & Succulent Soc. of America**

JULY 11, 12 — Saturday 1 to 4:30 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Begonia Show
American Begonia Society**

JULY 18, 19 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Fern Show
Los Angeles International Fern Society**

JULY 25, 26 — Saturday 1 to 4:30 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Miniature Rose Show
Pacific Rose Society**

SEPTEMBER 12, 13 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Cactus & Succulent Show
San Gabriel Valley Cactus & Succulent Society**

SEPTEMBER 18 — 5:30 to 11 p.m.
Queen Anne Frolic*

SEPTEMBER 26, 27 — 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Bonsai Show
Akebono Bonsai Society

*Sponsored by California Arboretum Foundation

**Co-sponsored by California Arboretum Foundation

DESCANSO GARDENS, La Canada

JULY 12 — 2:30 to 4 p.m.
Pasadena City College Swing Band
Directed by Paul Killian*

*Sponsored by Descanso Gardens Guild

SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN, Palos Verdes Peninsula

JULY 17, 18, 19 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Fuchsia Show
South Coast Fuchsia Society**

AUGUST 1, 2 — Sat. Noon to 4:30 p.m.
Sunday 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Bromeliad Show and Sale
South Bay Bromeliad Associates**

**Co-sponsored by South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation